



SERMON STUDY GUIDE | PART 5: Resolved: *Becoming a Wounded Healer* | 5.6.18 | [www.thestory.church](http://www.thestory.church) | social: @thestoryhouston

With today's message we'll conclude our 5-week series on forgiveness. If you've been around for this series, **what are your takeaways so far? What have you learned?** What questions remain? Or - if you're new to The Story (welcome!), **how much of a role does forgiveness play in your relationships on a daily basis?**

### Matthew 18:21-35: The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant

Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times."

Why did Peter expect there to be a limit ("up to seven") to the number of times we should forgive someone? What's the significance of Jesus' response ("seventy-seven times")?

Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. At this the servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

Approximately how much did the servant owe the king? Why was the servant's attempt to bargain with the king so absurd?

But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded. His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.' But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.

Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

Why was the king so upset with the servant?

When Jesus said, "This is how my heavenly Father will treat you unless you forgive..." he suggested that our willingness to show mercy to others is very closely connected to God's willingness to show mercy to us. Meanwhile, other parts of the New Testament seem to suggest that Jesus' sacrifice on the cross was an act of mercy toward *everyone* (2 Cor. 5:14-15). **What do you think Jesus might be getting at here? Which is it - did he die for everyone, or just for those who show mercy to others?**

Sometimes it can feel like Christianity focuses too much on sin. In a culture so committed to boosting self-esteem, the Christian doctrine of sin can often feel degrading or outdated. Do you think it's important that we continue to talk about our sins? Why or why not?

Biblically speaking, what's the difference between "mercy" and "justice"? What happens when we want mercy for ourselves, and justice for everybody else?

#### John 8:2-11: Caught in the Act

At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.

But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

What punishment, specifically, did Old Testament law prescribe for those guilty of adultery? (See *Leviticus 20:10, Deuteronomy 22:22*) How could this situation have become a "trap" for Jesus?

Would you say the teachers of the law and the Pharisees wanted mercy for the woman, or justice? And what about for themselves? Did they expect God to show them mercy, or justice?

We all fall into the trap of judging others as though we are "without sin," and the only way out of that trap is by acknowledging the ways we're not perfect. What sins have marked your life?

What pride or pain are you holding onto today that is keeping you from forgiving others the same way God has forgiven you? How do you think you might be able to let it go and live with MERCY as your *default setting*?

#### Colossians 3:12-19 - Making Mercy Your Default Setting

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.